I. Crisis of Identity in Ellison's *Invisible Man*

The present research work analyses the failure of the narrator in Ellison's *Invisible Man* to define himself as an African resulting from his own internalization of ideology of racism and expectation of white people, pervasive in his society. The society characterized by the sense of apathy, suppression, treachery and mistrust, creates the obstacle in his attempt to get recognition in the society. The narrator listens Armstrong's song Black and Blue "What did I do / To be so black / And blue" (14). This track emphasizes the conflict between the singer's inner feelings and the outer identity imposed on him by society. The narrator listens to Armstrong's song that he feels "white inside" and that "My only Sin / is in My Skin." He can not find out the cause that has made him almost a puppet. He is played from one corner to the next. "White" American has always been and still a life of war and opposition. Grandfather's words establish and foreshadow racism and bigotry that the young narrator encounters in a prejudiced society. Before his grandfather passes away, he whispers into the narrator's ears:

> Son, after I'm gone I want you to keep up the good fight. I never told you, but our life is a war and I have been a traitor all my born days, a spy in the enemy's country ever since I give up my gun back in the Reconstruction. Live with your head in the lion's mouth. I want you to overcome 'em with yeses, undermine 'em with grins, agree 'em to death and destruction, let 'em swoller you till they vomit or bust wide open.
>
> (17)

These words keep haunting his memory throughout his whole life because he could not figure out what his grand father meant when he said this. His parents urge him to forget the words of his grandfather, fearing that he might go crazy. He does not grasp

his grandfather's word until Tod Clifton, one of the men from the Brotherhood is killed. He attends the funeral, where he now fully understands what his grandfather was trying to say to him. The narrator is then motivated to plot against the Brotherhood by becoming a spy and acting loyal to the brotherhood, while he plans to overthrow them.

The quest for identity of the narrator does not materialize due to the appalling state of racism. The whites, as the members of privileged class are always inclined to oppress the blacks. They even do not like to see the progress on behalf of blacks. The whites like Norton, Emerson, Wrestrum are the most dangerous because they are not exposing themselves as what they really are. They project themselves as well-wisher of the black communities but to the core they are racist. Under the guise of different social activists, they want to rule black by imposing their own ideology. The so-called trustee like Norton proclaims himself as 'a bear of white man's burden' while educating the blacks. But hidden motive is to shape the conscience of the blacks in such a way that they will be ready to accept white man's rule at the end of their education.

The tendency to internalize white norms among the blacks has become a common phenomenon. The stronger one tries to oppress the weak and the helpless. In fact, it is also the product of the basic human tendency to oppress the weak and helpless when the victim is at hand. This chain of oppression goes on continuously regardless of any class and cast.

Though Ras seems to be guided by the pure motive but his violent strategy rather harms the member of his own community. There is no co-operation between narrator, Jack and Ras, though, they seem to be guided by the same notion of life, liberty and equality. There is a sense of distrust and lack of cooperation within black

community. The blacks appear against their own fellow black. Instead of following a common approach for the welfare of black community, each member is motivated by his own set of ideology. The blacks, too, are responsible in creating chaos and disintegration in their life.

The hospital scene is characterized by surrealistic and nightmarish experiences where the narrator suffers from the sense of alienation and loss of identity. Even doctors are motivated by colour consciousness in course of treatment and debates about the mode of diagnosis. As one of the white doctors says, "I think I still prefer surgery. And in this case especially, with this uh … background" (192). The mode of treatment to a person of African American background is something different. They can even test in their body and there is no need to take care about patient's psychology because it is "absolutely of no importance!" (193). African American is treated as inhuman beast. White racism in its force and sever industrial atmosphere at the background are responsible in the decadence of integrated black lives.

Ellison's *Invisible Man* has received numerous critical limelight from various perspectives since its publication. It was considered in 1965 in an inquiry of two hundred authors and critics among the most important works after Second World War. According to Richard Rurland and Malcolm Bradbury, the novel presents the absurd vision of human being. In *From Puritanism to Postmodernism*, they comment "Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) added to Wright's increasingly existential vision a Kafka-like absurdity by telling the story of a black whose colour has rendered him invisible as moral agent" (360).

Irving Howe argues that *Invisible Man* is a Negro novel, with the Negro narrator in search of an identity in the white-dominated society. He comments: "This novel is a soaring and exalted record of a Negro's journey through contemporary

American in search of success, companionship, and, finally, himself […]" (120). He adds:

> […] *Invisible Man* is a Negro novel-what white man could ever have written it? It is drenched in Negro life, talk, music: it tells us how distant even the best of the whites are from the black men that pass them the stress; and it is written from a particular compound of emotions that no white man could possible stimulate. To deny that this is a Negro novel is to deprive the Negroes of their own basic right: the right to cry out their difference. (120)

He claims that this novel came as result of White's treatment to blacks. How blacks are ignored and compelled to search their value in the society. If someone is not taken as human being, he struggles to get his existence, so in the novel *Invisible Man*, the narrator comes out of white dominated society and makes a journey for his authentic self.

Robert O' Meally takes the understanding of the narrator, of his individual, cultural and national history as the achievement of freedom. He is of the opinion that "We see in this work the evolution of a central theme: the more conscious a person is of his individual, cultural and national history the freer he becomes" (22). Peter. B. High sees invisibility of the narrator because of the blindness of the whites:

> The hero is a nameless black individual who also lives "underground", in a hole in New York city. He is "invisible" because of the people around him 'See only my surroundings, themselves, or figment of their imagination'. According to Ellison, the problem is that whites can not see blacks as individual people. (215)

The narrator is invisible because of the society's denial to see him as an individual. Whites do not see his internal feelings but surrounding only. Claiming the novel, *Invisible Man* oppressed by power politics, John Corry says that the politics of white society never understands the human value. Here his ideas are similar to Foucault's ideas of power and discourse. Using their power whites made distinction between blacks and whites. John here says:

> Much of the rhetorical and political energy of white society went toward proving itself that we were not human and that we had no sense of he refinement of human values. But this in itself pressured your motivated you to make even finer distinctions, both as to personality and value. You had to because your life depended that you do so. You had to identify those values which were human and preserving o your life and interest as against those which were in human and destructive. (16-17)

The ethnic difference has made blacks struggle against the whites. In the novel *Invisible Man,* Henry Gates also finds ethnic difference, which made the narrator struggle against the prospect of splintered culture, divided or dissipated selves represent in part some of the pressures that contribute to the diffuse and fragmented life. The awareness of ethnic difference compels the African Americans go against the authority and tyranny of the whites:

> The threatened obliteration of the African Americans also sharpens awareness of ethnic difference. Against to manifest authority and tyranny of the whites, ethnicity ensures a certain dignity and identity a more radical response takes the form of a proclamation of African American power […] it has cut itself form the portent force of the

African American phallus; it is divorced from the pulsing mystery and

promise of human feeling and being. (139-240)

The conscious knowledge of an individual tries to search freedom, freedom for existence. Likewise Alaine Locke considers *Invisible Man* to be a great novel which presents psychological realism of human being in the invisibility of the narrator. He argues: "*Invisible Man* was a great novel, although also not without its artistic flaws said to say […] stylistically [it] unrolls in a volcanic flow of vivid sometimes of lived imagery, a tour de force of psychological realism" (qtd. in Graham, 178). The novel unrolls some kind of volcanic flow out of the dominated desire, which expresses the lived imagery force of the narrator; suppressed mentality comes in the form of volcano.

In this way, the critics have approached the text in many ways. But none of them, however, concerns with the black characters' internalization of racial ideology and its consequent effects upon the identity of the characters. Thus, the present research work contends that their characters in *Invisible Man* suffer from the identity crisis due to the stigma resulting from the internalization of the ideology of racism.

In the novel the narrator bears no identity due to the internalization of white ideology that is pervasive in the society. The major problem in the blacks' lives results from internalization of white norms which has brought disintegration both in the cultural level as well as in the personal relation. Dr. Bledsoe, a black character, highly appreciates and respects to Mr. Norton, a trustee of a college but tortures and denigrates his own racial fellow narrator. Likewise Brockway, a black, retains his position of influence by betraying the efforts of other blacks to gain equality. This sort of behavioural pattern inside the black community has brought disaster in their lives.

The pervasive racism makes the existence of poor and helpless black always questionable. One can not lead a life of self respect because one is always defined and categorized by a dominant social voice. The acceptance of western ideas of beauty and negation to one's cultural roots has further added fuel to the complex situation in the identity formation.

The hierarchy within the communities or within the community breeds psychological splits and disintegration in communal norms. There is no any single pattern in creating hierarchy. But colour and material possessions have become the dominant touchstone. It is because of the lack of whiteness and material possession Ellison's black characters live like circus animals. They fight between themselves with a bitter sense of enmity in order to expose themselves as a powerful member of the society. The Battle Royal scene prominently exposes this situation. The narrator is ousted from the college for his minor flaw. He has unintentionally exposed white trustee to the incestuous entanglements of a Negro farmer's family. But such severe punishment is the product of his racial minority. Even in a factory hospital narrator suffers from the sense of alienation and identity crisis as the doctors are motivated by colour consciousness in course of treatment and debate among themselves about the mode of diagnosis because the narrator is from different "background". Dr. Bledsoe has ousted him from the college because he is superior in his community in terms of power, position and wealth and at the same time, he wants to present himself as a loyal servant in the eyes of white trustee even being a servile.

Race is the classification of human beings into distinguishable groups that are based on physical characteristics i.e. skin colour, hair, texture, eye shape etc. Racism is defined focusing on the genetically transmitted traits and its connections to social characteristics. It encompasses the beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, and practices that

define people on racial division. Thus, racism is the belief system and discrimination in its practices. In the practice of racism on internalizes the belief system of superior group to adjust him in racist society. Later the effect of internalization becomes an stigma that causes the crisis of identity. Dr. Bledsoe, a black character in the novel internalizes the white norms so that becomes stigmatized and fails to get his real identity.

The present research work has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter gives a short outline of the present study and it presents the bird's eye view of the entire work. The second chapter discusses the theoretical modality. It clarifies the terms: race, race relations, racism, identity and stigma. On the basis of theoretical modality, the third chapter will analyze the text. It will sort out some extracts from the text to prove the hypothesis of the research work. This part acts as the core of the research work. Finally the researcher concludes the ideas put forward in the earlier chapters and shows the invisible position of the narrator and his identity crisis as the effect of stigma with the internalization of racism in the fourth chapter.

II. Internalization of Racism, Stigmatized Self and Identity Crisis

Race is a notion for the division of human beings into physically, biologically, and genetically distinct groups. The idea of race divides humanity into unchanging natural types on the basis of physical features that are transmitted 'through the blood'. Moreover, the term indicates that the mental and moral behaviour of human beings, as well as individual personality, capacities and ideas related to racial matters.

Racial characteristics, at present, are taken as defining features of certain group of people. But such mode of definition lacks any scientific ground for its justification. Such stereotypical pattern of behaviour lacks any transcendental racial features. Both in the past and present blacks are discriminated and declared as an inferior race on the basis of colour. Ever since the pre-Christian era to the present the very black colour is associated with ugliness, despair, evil and death where as the whiteness is associated with beauty, goodness, virtue. The racist whites try to their best to dehumanize Negro by labeling them as a link between monkey and men i.e. white people are their approval goes something like the notion of New Testament that "we are the chosen people look at the colour of our skins. The others are black or yellow: That is because of their sins" (Fanon 30). Thus, they try to justify racism in the name of religion by saying that Jesus Christ is white in colour therefore whites are naturally superior in society and nearer to the God. This concept of black as an inferior being foregrounded to the unjust and bigotrous attitude and behaviour that led to the blacks as scripturally ordained status of perpetual servitude.

Fanon was the first to notice the most important fact about race. Racist ideas such as 'blackness' were the psychological force of their construction f self. It means they acquired an objective existence in and through the behaviour of people. The self images and self-construction might be transmitted from generation to generation. So

Fanon stressed on the objective psychological fact of race as a determining part of social process. This Fanonist stress on construction of individuals' self-perceptions has been the part of the response of many black commentators by critics such as Appiah. They found that the perceptions of race have acted only negatively. However, fictional race may be shown to be as an objective category. Its power as discursive formation remains unabated.

Racism always emerges from race, a concept used with ethnicity and culture. Race, in particular, is the classification of human beings into distinguishable groups that are based on physical characteristics, i.e., skin color, hair texture, eye shape etc. Ethnicity is the classification of individuals who share the common ancestry comprised of costumes and traditions that are passed from generation to generation, religion, dress and nationality. Culture, on the other hand, is a broader category that extends beyond race and ethnicity to include any group of people who share common lifestyle which are passed on to members of the particular group, e.g., socio-economic status, sexual orientation and geographical location.

Racism is largely controlled by heritage, attribute and the differences between the races innate trails rather than social factors. This contemporary from of racism links itself to discourses such as patriotism, nationalism, Xenophobia and gender differences. This is an attempt to produce old racist wine in a new scientific bottle. Still each "historical circumstance" is shaping a distinct form of racism. "Racist ideologies and practice have distinct meaning bounded by historical circumstances and determined in struggle" (Gilroy 20-23). Racism is misbehaviour of a group of people on the basis of race, color and religion. It is a blinker hatred, envy, or prejudice. Racial discrimination is often based on the discrimination of colour where the word discrimination denotes the denial of equality based on the personal

characteristics such as race and colour. Gretchen Gerzina defines racism as, "an active or passive response to the specious belief that generally traits are lined to social characteristics."

Racism is founded on the belief in one's racial superiority over other. It encompasses the beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and practices that define people on racial classification. It involves a generalized lack of knowledge or experience as it applies to negative beliefs and attitudes. It uses the inflexible assumptions that differences are biologically determined and therefore inherently unchangeable. It doesn't take place in a vacuum, but rather is enacted and reinforced through social, cultural and institutional practices that endorse the hierarchal power of one group over other.

Racism is a belief system or a set of implicit assumption about the superiority of one race or ethnic group other than that of one's own. It can be defined as the discrimination made by a group of people on the basis of race, colour and religion where discrimination is the product of prejudice and stereotypical mode of thoughts or assumption mainly based on colour and race. It involves the superiority of one group, ethnicity or its cultural practices over the other group because the entitled inferior group lacks the set of criteria as prescribed by the privileged group. In course of social dealings, racism exists both in conscious and unconscious level. But, to the core, its effect is much disastrous damaging both victims and the perpetrators if it is practices in an unhealthy manner. In fact, it is a false notion associated with the generic traits to the social characteristics. Therefore, Gerzina has rightly said, "Racism at individual level involves a misguided personal belief that an entire racial group is deficient or superior because of a set of moral, intellectual, or a cultural traits that are thought to be indicated by the group's biological origin"(126). Personal traits, characteristics and

beliefs are misguided in individual level of racism, that are thought to be pointed out by the biological origin of certain group.

Racism can be both overt and covert. Overt racism is what must people are familiar with. Since it is easily detectable and takes the form of direct behaviour or verbally discriminatory acts. Covert racism is more subtle, yet occurs more often than overt racism and is more easily hidden, denied or discounted. Racism has basically three forms: individual racism, institutional racism and cultural racism. If a white colored American brutally kills or exploits a Negro that is individual racism, and if an employer decides not to admit a Negro employee because s/he believes that the employee might drive away business but tell the person that there are no more vacancies available is an example of covert individual racism. If a country, club that has clearly written rules which excludes any non-white members, it is an example of overt institutional racism, and if an academic curriculum that only emphasizes European American history and does accept the history of black ethnic/cultural groups, it is an example of covert institutional racism. Likewise, the mass killings of Blacks and enslavement of Afro-Americans is overt cultural racism. And the unrealistic and stereotypical portrayal of ethnic minorities on the media is an example of covert cultural racism. Racism can manifest in various places.

Contemporary form of racism i.e. new racism attaches to the concepts like patriotism, nationalism, gender differences, xenophobia, etc. These concepts give a way to a definition of race in terms of culture and identity.

Identity becomes an issue when doubt and uncertainty displace something that is assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable. Identities are constantly producing themselves a new; they are not something once and for all. Cornel West says:

> Identity is fundamentally about desire and death. How you construct
> your identity is predicated on how you construct desire for recognition;
> quest for visibility; the sense of being acknowledged; a deep desire for
> association . . . then there is profound desire for protection, for security
> for safety, for surety. (15-16)

He defines identity as the matter of life and death that anyone's desire constructs
his/her identity to protect herself /himself. Identity is the yearning for recognition and
the will for visibility. Identity gives anyone the involvement in social activities and it
is acknowledged by society. Security, safety and surety can be obtained only through
identity.

The meaning of personal identity has come under the examination of
philosophers and psychologists. Philosophers have been concerned about identifying
what dimensions of the individual provide the sense of sameness into the future. The
concept of personal identify is important to philosophers because questions of
morality and self-interest depend upon individuals having a sense of identity. An
individual decides to sacrifice immediate satisfaction for later benefit. The underlying
assumption is that he or she will be the same person in the future. Therefore, he or she
will be the one to benefit from the decision. An individual does not achieve a pension
with sacrifice maturing in twenty years if he or she believes the beneficiary of the
pension in twenty years will be an unknown, unrelated person. Similarly, an
individual does not obtain a pension at a cost of maturing in twenty years if he or she
expects to die in six months. The former case would exist if persons had no sense of
sameness into the future.

There are two more basic components of the sense of personal identity. These
two components know both that the self is continuous over time and that the self is

unique, or distinct from others. The concept of personal identity is inherent in the most interesting account of the philosophical problems. R. Nozick offered the *closet continuer* schema. "According to this schema, the sense of personal identity over tine is based on two judgments: first, to what degree is the future self causally related to the present self, and , second, to what degree is the future self unique" (qtd. in Hart 122). For example, for a person to suppose that he will be the same individual five years form now, he must believe that he will grow out of the person he is now (causally related). He must also develop into only one person in the future (unique). If many people could be him in the future, his sense of personal identity would be disrupted.

In the psychological literature, the sense of personal continuity and distinctness from others have drawn the attention of theorists. For William James, the sense of personal identity was most closely linked to the 'I' or the 'self-as-knower'. James identified the period of adolescence as the lowest sense of personal continuity. A stable self-identity derives from a sense of the continuity of the self-as-knower. William James in Psychology: The Briefer Course wrote: "each of us spontaneously considers that by 'I' he means something always the same" (36). James believes that "the worst alterations of the self" (207) are associated with disruption in the sense of personal continuity. Very similar connotations of identify can be found in Erikson's work: Identity, then, in its subjective aspect, is the awareness of the fact that there is a self-sameness and continuity to the … 'style of one's individuality' (qtd. in Hart 123). A feeling of individuality or distinctness from others also derives from the subjective nature of the self-as-knower. According to James, "Other men's experiences, no matter how much I may know about them, never bear this vivid, this peculiar brand"

(71). The special feeling linked to one's own experience is the basis for the sense of personal uniqueness.

An individual's identity remains in crisis when he is not allowed to act according to his won will for his visibility, recognition and protection. Racism is one of the causes of identity crisis for the victims; Ralf Ellison's novel Invisible Man show invisibility and identity crisis of the protagonist as the effects of racism.

Race relations are the forms of behaviour that arise from the contacts of different racial groups. The concept employs all relationships that determine the relative status of racial groups in the community. Differences in physical and genetic traits are important in contributing to the economic, social and political relationships. These relationships form the subject matter of race relations. However, the association of people belonging to one racial origin also involves the association of groups with other racial origin.

A distinction should be established between the usage of the term race relations and other related usages. The term is variously used to cover the forms of intergroup, interethnic and majority-minority relationships. In the latter usages, race may or may not be significant form of the behaviour. These concepts incorporate other forms of behaviour as well.

In the United States since World War II, the concept intergroup relations has been used to include Negro-white relationships, the contact of religious groups and of different organizations. Ethnic relations is not limited to analyze people with distinct racial features. Besides race, the other forms such as religion, language and nationality are the differentiating features of ethnic groups. For example, in the parts of Canada, prejudice and self-conscious behaviour characterize the relationship between the English-speaking and French-speaking communities; these people are of

the same racial origin but vary in religion, language, national origin and behaviour. Minorities are racial or ethnic groups that occupy subordinate position in the communities where they live. They suffer segregation and severe political restrictions because of racial, social or cultural characteristics. After the end of British colonial rule in India, India and Pakistan emerged as separate states owing to religious differences-the former predominantly Hindu and the latter Muslim. The separation has witnessed the continued presence of Muslim minorities in India and Hindu minorities in Pakistan.

These related terms imply the behaviour shaped by distinct group features. They are sometimes employed to describe and analyse the phenomena in which race plays a significant role. In the United States, Negro-white relationships are taken differently as intergroup, interethnic and majority-minority relations.

A fundamental issue of race relations concerns the effects of contact. Some writers argue that increased contact between groups of different values and origins will cause heightened conflict. Others view that increased contact between such groups will decrease prejudice and fear and lead to intergroup harmony. Social science evidence supports neither of these extremes. Increased interaction between different groups can result in either greater discrimination and rejection or greater respect and acceptance depending upon the situation in which it happens. Gordon Allport in his review of relevant research concluded that four features of the interaction situation are of the prime importance. Good intergroup relations result when the two groups get equal status, seek common purposes, are helpfully dependent upon each other, and interact with the positive support of authorities and law. Ira N. Brophy found that white American merchant seamen tended to hold racial attitudes in

relation to Negro-American seamen: the more discriminated, the more negative the latter's attitude towards the former.

Race relations is used to describe and analyze the phenomena which result from the interaction of different racial groups. Interracial contact can result in either prejudice and conflict or harmony depending upon the situation in which it happens. Prejudice and discrimination are the practices of racism that arouses the stigma that is racial stigma. This mode of racial stigma can be transmitted through lineage and equally contaminate all the member of family. For example- a child born in black family will be automatically stigmatized for being the child of a black Parent.

Stigma is a mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance quality, or a person. It is a social, cultural and psychological construct which is understood as of negative values and attributes created by the society. Stigma is any condition, attributes or behaviour that symbolically marks of the bearer as culturally unacceptable or inferior with the consequent feelings of shame, guilt and disgrace. In other words, it is a social process related to personal experience characterized by exclusion, rejected, blame or devaluation that results from experience o anticipation of an adverse social judgment about a person or a group. In any society, stigma has negative connotation and its discrediting effects are very adverse. Erving Goffman, in his essay "Selection from Stigma" defines stigma as:

> Such an attribute is a stigma, especially when its discrediting effect is
> very extensive; sometimes it is also called failing, a shortcoming, a
> handicap. It constitutes a special discrepancy between virtual and
> actual social identity. Note that are other type of discrepancy between
> actual and virtual social identity, for example the kind that causes us to
> reclassify an individual form one socially anticipated category to a

> different but equally well anticipated one, and the kind that causes to
>
> alter our estimation of the individual upward. Note to, that not all
>
> undesirable attributes are at issue. But only those which are
>
> incongruous with our stereotype what a given type of individual should
>
> be. (204)

Individual with prejudice may experience an existential crisis that may be activated by the stigma related to having a colour as well as conditions created by colour itself. It is thus, a social categorization that legitimates the negative attributes because differences are highlighted than similarity.

Therefore, stigmatized people accept themselves as "other" in the society. They accept their derogate, self-hate and devalued status as the puppets of the social system. This is a kind of social and psychological death to them. Stigmatized people thus become dependent, passive, helpless and childlike because it is expected form them. In fact, they internalize what theoretical norms desire them to be and "to agree that he does indeed fall short of what he really thought to be" (Goffman 206). Social rejection or avoidance affects not only the stigmatized individuals but also everyone who is socially involved with them as family, friends, and relatives. A kind of permanent social rejection force people to limit their relationship to other stigmatized people and to those whom social bond out weigh the stigma such as family members. Hence paradoxical societal norms establish a subordinate and dependent position for stigmatized people. Stigma is the need of non-stigmatized people to maintain a sense of supremacy. It is thus seen as social taboo.

Different ideologies are constructed by the society to prove that the stigmatized people are fundamentally inferior to the so-called beings. Nevertheless, they were even regarded as less than human-the "other". Thus, stigmatized groups are

not treated on equal grounds. Here Erving Goffman in his "Selection from Stigma" opines:

> We construct a stigma-theory, an ideology to explain his inferiority and account for the danger he represents, sometimes rationalizing an animosity based on the differences, such as those of social class. We use specific stigma terms such as cripple, bastard, moron in our daily discourse as a source of metaphor and imagery, typically without giving thought to the original meaning. (205)

These above lines describe that the stigma is human construction that is based on the superiority and inferiority position in social class with many differentness. We use many metaphor, imagery to represent stigma without giving the original sense.

No individual in this world is exactly alike. The variations in shape, size, skin, colour, gender, cultural background can be stigmatized at any time. That's why, Erving says "the stigma is equivalent to understand differentness" (qtd. in Coleman 217). All human differences are potentially stigmatizable: "As we move out of one social context where a difference is desired, into another context where the difference is undesired, we begin to feel the effect of stigma" (217). Social differentness based on desired and undesired create stigma in person in everywhere. First, any human differences serve as the preliminary requisite to be stigmatized. Secondary, to be stigmatized is an inescapable fate as this process depends upon cultural and historical background. "No one really ever knows when he/she will acquire a stigma or when social norms might change to stigmatize a trait she/he or already posses" (Coleman 226). In this sense enigma in the social factor and it becomes necessity to non-stigmatized groups. Those possessing power of dominant group in the society determine the concept of stigmas, which human differences are desired and which are

not. So, the stigmatized people are always marginalized from the mainstream of the community simply because they do not relate to the norm of specific culture and this possess an undesired difference fro what the norm anticipates.

On the other hand, it has become necessary to understand the concept of the norm in the prevalent society because anyone can be stigmatized at any time. The concept of normalcy is again social; it is not fixed and shaped by cultural, historical and social forces. "Normality becomes the supreme goal for many stigmatized individual until they realize that there is no precise definition of normality except what they would be without their stigma" (Coleman 225). A man stigmatized because he fails to represent the majority of the population. That is why Lennard J. Davis says, "The concept of the norm, unlike that of an ideal, implies the majority of the population must or should somehow be part of the norm" (13). Ultimately, average then becomes paradoxically a kind of ideal, devoutly to be wished. In this way, the various extremes of human traits as tallness, shortness, height, intelligence, ambitiousness, strength would have been seen as errors. Such differences are therefore stigmatized in the long run. In a way, the construction of normalcy divides the total population into standard and non-standard sub-population as well as conceiving norm and non-norm.

Stigma legitimizes the negative attributes to the human differences because it is human construction. The process of stigmatization occurs only when the social control component is imposed or the undesired differentness leads to some restriction in physical and social mobility. Besides, it also restricts access to the opportunities that allow an individual to develop his/ her potential. In addition, stigmatized people are segregated, ignored, neglected, and isolated from every social participations. Negative attributes related to stigmatized people are thus cast down from the social

periphery. For instance, the dwarf people in every society are marginalized simply because they do not fulfill the pre-requisite for being normal. As they lack in their height they are stigmatized in every socio-factors. Though they are used in movies they are not portrayed as the main protagonist; they simply partake in the role of idiots and foolish. In this way, they are used as the objects of the entertainment rather then she subjects, and their contribution is seen as inferior. Not only this, they are given less priority in the other jobs too. People do not suspect on their capability to work, but on their difference. They do not represent with the majority of the population with such attributes; they are deprived and marginalized in every sector. Here, Lerita M. Coleman says:

> Stigma often results in a special kind of downward mobility. Part of the power of stigmatization lies in the realization that people who are stigmatized or acquire a stigma lose their place in the social hierarchy. Consequently, most people want to ensure that they are counted in the nonstigmatized "Majority". This, of course, leads to more stigmatization. (218)

In this way, stigmatization appears to be uncontrollable because any human difference serves as the basis for stigma. Moreover, it also manifests the underlying fear or being stigmatized as anyone can be stigmatized at any time. Stigma is therefore, non-stigmatized people's necessity in order to feel good about themselves. They possess tales superiority thereby enslaving the concept that stigmatized people are fundamentally inferior. Likewise, non-stigmatized people convey a sense of inferiority to stigmatized people as invisible, non-existent or dead through social avoidance and social rejection.

In a nutshell, stigma is a complex phenomenon of the society and it is ambiguously and arbitrarily defined. Basically, any human difference, different cultural background, or any other undesired attributes qualify to be stigmatized. The dominant group of the society judges the other groups. In the part, stigma reflects the value judgment of other group thereby creating a sense of supremacy. Stigma is a dynamic and powerful social tool:

> If stigma is a social construct, constructed by cultures, by social groups, and by individual to designate some human difference as discrediting, then the stigmatized process is indeed a powerful and pernicious social tool. The inferiority/superiority issue is a most interesting way of understanding how and why people continue to stigmatize. (Coleman 218)

Stigma has become a powerful and destructive dimension to analyse the inferiority/superiority issue related to culture, social group in each society. Therefore, stigma is considered to be open-ended synthesis that continues from one generation to the next.

Stigma mirrors culture and society. Lerita M. Coleman says that "Stigma represents a view of life; a set of personal and social construct, a set of social relation and social relationship, a form of social reality. It is a form of social reality" (216).The Greeks, who originated the term stigma to refer to bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier. The signs were cut or burnt into the body and advertised that the bearer was a slave, a criminal, or a traitor a blemished person, ritually polluted, to be avoided especially in public places.

In the 1960s, Erving Goffman proposed the categorization of stigma with three dimensions:

"First there are abominations of the body the various physical
deformities. Next there are blemished of individual character perceived
as weak will, unnatural passions, treacherous and rigid beliefs, and
dishonesty, these being inferred from a known record of, for example,
mental disorder, imprisonment, addiction, alcoholism, homosexuality,
unemployment, suicidal attempts, and radical political behaviour.
Finally there are the tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion, these
being stigma that can be transmitted through lineages and equally
contaminate all members of a family" (205).

The first definition is related to the various physical deformities such as leprosy,
clubfoot, cleft lip or plate and muscular dystrophy. The second definition is the
deviation in personal traits and the final definition of stigma is the tribal stigma of
race, nation ad religion, this type of stigma is can be transmitted through one
generation to another generation.

That's why stigma theory reminds us that the problems we confront are not
disability, ethnicity, race, class, homosexuality, religion or gender: they are instead
the inequalities, negative attitudes, misrepresentations, institutional practices that
result from the process of stigmatization.

Finally, the concept of racial stigma aims to explore beneath the cognitive acts
of individuals and investigate the structure of social relations within which those
individuals operate. An important consequence of racial stigma is "vicious circles" of
increasing causations, self-sustaining processes in which the failure of blacks to make
progress justifies for white the very prejudicial attitudes that ensure the blacks will not
progress. The novel *Invisible Man* includes the black characters who are discriminated
by white characters. The narrator goes New York for a better job. He becomes ready

fight with other black fellows to entertain the whites. This is the internalization of racist ideology. Most of the black characters in the novel internalize the racist ideology that results into stigma leading to identity crisis. So the theory Racial Stigma is best suited to study the novel.

III. Stigmatized Self of the Black Characters in Ellison's *Invisible Man*

In the novel *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, the narrator moves constantly from one place to another struggling to get his real identity. He feels his life complicated by a racist American society. Though he is conscious about his African American values, he fails to assert his real self. The narrator's centre struggle involves the conflict between how others perceive him and how he perceives himself. Racist attitude causes others to view him in terms of racial stereotype as a mugger, bumpkin, or savage. But the narrator desires recognition of his individuality rather than recognition based on these stereotypes. The 'blindness' of others stems from an inability to see the narrator without imposing these alien identities on him. The stereotypes and expectations of a racist society compel blacks to behave only in certain ways. That society never allows them to act according to their own will. Even the actions of black activists seeking equality are manipulated as if they are puppet on strings. Throughout the novel, the narrator encounters this phenomenon. Although he strives to achieve his won identity in society, he fails.

In the novel we find the narrator in crisis of identity. He does different works, goes to different places in search of his authentic self. But he is not successful either. His decision to move from one place to another shows that he wants to live, he wants to exist. But he is not successful. Throughout the story, the narrator embarks on the mental and physical journey to seek his real identity. The narrator's life is filled with constant eruptions of mental traumas. The biggest psychological burden he has is his identity.

The narrator thinks the identity given to him by white does not reflect himself, but he fails to recognize that identity is simply a mirror that reflects the surroundings. The viewers relate the narrator's identity. The viewers are only the part of the narrator

that is apparently connected to the viewer's own world. Lucius Brockway, an old operator of the paint factory, saw the narrator only as an existence threatening his job, despite that the narrator is sent there to merely assist him. Brockway repeatedly questions the narrator about his purpose there and his mechanical credentials but never even bother to enquire his name. Because to the old fellow whom the narrator is as a person is uninterested. What is an object and what that white object's relationship is to Brockway's engine room is important. The narrator's identity is derived from this relationship and this relationship suggests to Brockway that his identity is a "threat".

The doctors do not consult with the narrator to see what he wants. Thus he loses part of his identity against his will. He adds:

> I felt to plotting ways of short-circuiting the machine. Perhaps if I shifted my body about so that the two nodes would come together- No, not only was there no room but it might electrocute me . . . I had no desire to destroy myself even if it destroyed the machine; I wanted freedom, not destruction. It was exhausting, for no matter what the scheme conceived, there was one constant flaw- myself. There was no getting around it. I could no more escape than I could think of my identity. Perhaps I thought, the two things are involved with each other. When I discover who I am, I'll be free. (198)

Here, Narrator is feeling an alien personality even in hospital because the doctors do not consult him about what he wants. He is taken as an object to be experimented by the doctors in the treatment centre of Liberty Paint plant. So he desires to escape from the hospital but he fears about the result of that action. Later he leaves the desire to escape rather thinks about his identity. He thinks if he gets his identity then he will be free.

In chapter twenty three, he realizes that the white people, Norton, Emerson and even the Brotherhood do not see him as an individual. They see the narrator as something to use for their benefit and then throw. He realizes his invisibility and says:

> I *was* and yet I was invisible, that was the fundamental contradiction. I was and yet I was unseen. It was frightening and as I sat there I sensed another frightening world of possibilities. For now I saw that I could agree with Jack without agreeing. And I could tell Harlem to have hope when there was no hope. Perhaps I could tell them to hope until I found the basis of something real, some firm ground for action that would lead them onto the plane of history. (408)

The narrator realizes that he has been used by white people including the brotherhood. He is used for their advancement due to his invisibility. He says that he was there for them but was invisible himself because nobody tries to know him. He always agrees with Jack without any personal interest but later knows that he has been used by them. He is in dilemma to tell the black people of Harlem to have hope when he thinks there was no hope but he is optimistic until he has the basis of something real, fixed ground that would lead the Harlem people in their history.

The climax of *Invisible Man* occurs when a riot breaks out in Harlem. The microcosmic world of Harlem erupts in a shower of fire, gunshots, looting and terror. The narrator barely escapes from this life. Some of the following lines describe the world of Harlem during a riot:

> I rolled, flopping around, willing myself to crawl closer to the curb but unable, feeling a sudden wet warmth upon my face and seeing the safe shooting wildly into the intersection and the men rounding the corner into the dark, pounding, gone; gone now, as the skittering safe bounded

off at a tangent, shot into the intersection and lodged in the third rail

and set up a curtain of sparks that lit up the block like a blue dream.

(431)

The above lines describe the scenario of Harlem during the riot. Narrator explains that the black community bas turned against itself by burning and looting its own homes and stores. It is falling into the trap that the Brotherhood has set. But the Ras, a black character, yells for the narrator's death, and the narrator runs away to be saved.

The denouement occurs when the narrator loses himself upon the realization that Brother Jack has set him up only to knock him down:

They were laughing outside the hedge and leaving and I lay in a cramp, wanting to laugh and yet knowing that Ras was not funny, or not only funny, but dangerous as well, wrong but justified, crazy, and yet coldly sane . . . Why did they make it seem funny, *only* funny? I thought. And yet knowing that it was. It was funny and dangerous and sad. Jack had it, or had stumbled upon it and used it to prepare a sacrifice. And I had been used as a tool. (454)

Here, the narrator realizes that he has been knocked down by Brother Jack. In the last part of novel when the riot has incited in the black communities by Ras and even by the brotherhood, narrator is blamed for the riot by Ras. Narrator runs away to encounter two police officers in the street, who ask to see the contents of his briefcase. When he was hiding himself from the Police inside the hedge, police were laughing outside the hedge. Narrator also wants to laugh but he can not because of pain. He was frightened from the Ras's attitude. Narrator accepts Ras's objective but resents his strategy. He questions himself why the whites make it feel funny. It was dangerous and sad as well as funny. Jack uses the narrator as a tool for that riot.

When the narrator realizes his invisibility and others' deception to him, he is lost in the sea of darkness and determines not to be deceived again:

> I stumbled down and plunged against some kind of partition and sailed headlong, coughing and sneezing, into another dimensionless room, where I continued to roll about the floor in my outrage . . . "That's enough, don't kill yourself. You've run enough, you're through with them at last," and I collapsed, face toward and lay there beyond the point of exhaustion, too tired to close my eyes. (457-58)

Narrator is deceived everywhere due to his internalization of white domination as well as racist ideology. He falls into the manhole while he runs away to be safe from the riot as well as police. In the manhole, he stumbles up and down to come out of that manhole but those efforts go in vain. He keeps his efforts to come out since days and months but gets failed. He is very angry ad screams, roll in the floor. Finally he seems to hear a sound that tells him not to kill himself in vain. He is tired and collapsed and laid without the point of exit. Then he closes his eyes. This scene is also portraying the result of the racist society.

In the riot, the narrator becomes a target for an angry mob. He remembers: "I felt myself plunge down, down; a long drop that ended up a load of coal that sent up a cloud of dust, and I lay in the black dark upon the black coal no longer running, hiding or concerned, hearing the shifting of the coal, as from somewhere above their voices came floating down" (455). This is the situation when he falls into the manhole and slowly the lid of that manhole gets covered by the police. He does not run in the coal because it is a manhole so he lives in the black dark coal. As the narrator winds up in a coal cellar, he realizes that he is now literally invisible to everyone and is free

to plan his return to society, where he will carry out his plan to fight against the whites.

The most important motif in novel is that of blindness, which recurs throughout the novel and generally represents how people willfully avoid seeing and confronting the truth. Then narrator repeatedly notes that people's prejudice does allow them to see him; it has forced him into a life of invisibility. Because he has realized that the world is full of blind men and sleep-walkers who can not see him for what he is, the narrator describes himself as an invisible man. The motif of invisibility pervades the novel, often manifesting itself hand in hand with the motif of blindness-one person becomes invisible because another is blind. While the novel almost represents blindness in a negative light, it treats invisibility much more ambiguously. Invisibility can bring disempowerment, but it can also bring freedom and mobility. At the end of the novel, however, the narrator has realized that while invisibility may bring safety, actions undertaken in secrecy cannot ultimately have any meaningful impact. One may undermine one's enemies from a position of invisibility, but one cannot make significant changes to the world. Accordingly, in the epilogue the narrator decides to emerge from his 'hibernation', he resolves to face the society and make a visible difference.

The novel begins with a prologue describing the depressed state of the narrator, who does not reveal his name throughout the entire novel. The narrator has taken to an underground life, where he remains unknown and invisible to the people of New York. He convinces the readers that he is actually invisible. He claims; "I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me" (7). His lair is constructed of light bulbs, which he bas been stealing from the city. Here, invisibility affords the narrator the opportunity to seal electricity from the power company. By

illegally draining their resources-both electrical and otherwise- he forces the company to acknowledge his existence yet obstructs any response from them, including any racist response. By remaining metaphorically and literally invisible to them, he announces himself as a presence but nonetheless escapes the company's control. The excessive lighting of the narrator's underground hole not only emphasizes the narrator's presence to the electric company authorities, the narrator also attempts to 'see' himself clearly with this light without the clouding influence of outside opinion. The rest of the novel goes on to describe how the narrator has put himself in the position of an invisible loner. Invisible man endures many horrible events that shape him to his final state. Many of these events are related to the form of discrimination.

An obvious scene of discrimination is the dreadful Battle Royal scene in the first chapter. The narrator is forced into a Battle Royal with other black in order to entertain white audiences. In this battle, he is blindfolded, and he does not see his prestige while he is compelled to engage in this sort of game: "Blindfolded, I could no longer control my motions. I had no dignity. I stumbled about like a baby or a drunken man" (23). He is ordered by the white to fight with other black colleagues for the entertainment of whites. He was not in his control. His dignity is in the hand of whites. He is played like a baby or a drunken man by the racist white society. Symbolically, the blindfold represents the black youths' inability to see through the white men's masks of goodwill. Brutality and inhumanness are displayed in the description of the Battle Royal:

> I glimpsed a boy violently punching the air and heard him scream in
> pain as he smashed his hand against a ring post. For a second I saw
> him bent over holding his hand, then going down as a blow caught his
> unprotected head. I played one group against the other, slipping in and

throwing a punch then stepping out of range while pushing the other

into the melee to take the blows blindly aimed at me. The smoke was

agonizing and there were no rounds, no bells at three minute intervals

to relieve our exhaustion. The room spun round me, a swirl of lights,

smoke, sweating bodies surrounded by tense white faces. I bled from

both nose and mouth, the blood spattering upon my chest. (23-24).

The narrator suffers defeat in the Battle Royal. He sees that the blacks are fighting

with each other just to please the whites. Narrator himself is taking part in that battle

for the same purpose. They all are blindfolded. He is seriously injured though he is

bound to fight with other blacks. All the boys who are fighting each other are heavily

sweated and injured. White faces in the swirl of lights and smoke are entertaining that

battle.

Battle Royal scene focuses on the fact that instead of working together to

protest white's racist treatment the young black men find themselves turning against

each other for prize money. Tatlock's denial to take fake defeat implies how the

strongest and wiliest member of the black community's take advantage out of their

own fellow members by refusing to co-operate against the common white enemy.

Tatlock's blunt reply of crushing the narrator for his own sake instead of the benefit of

white audience shows the vacuity of co-operation within black communities: "I will

break you behind, he whispered hoarsely. For them? For *me* sonofabitch!" (25). The

narrator asks Tatlock to pretend of defeat to get rid from that battle.

It is not only the member like Tatlock but conscious figures like the narrator

is also responsible for the worsening situation because the narrator is also moved by

the corrupting influence of prizes and praise on his own behalf as he wants to be a

winner instead of offering the opportunity to Tatlock.

Though unintentional it may be, Trubloods' incest act with his daughter brings lots of disgrace not only in his personal life but to his daughter and wife and in a broad sense to the black community as whole.

Internalization of racist ideology can be seen in Vet. The vet explains turning Mr. Norton that invisible man is the white man's puppet:

> he has eyes and ears and a good distended African nose, but he fails to understand the simple facts of life. *Understand*. Understand? It's a worse than that. He registers with his sense but short-circuits his brain. Nothing has meaning. He takes it in but he does't digest it. Already he is – well, bless my soul! A walking zombie! Already he's learned to repress no only his emotions but his humanity. He's invisible, a walking personification of the Negative, the most perfect achievement of your dream, sir! The mechanical man! (80-81)

Here Vet talks with Mr. Norton about the attitude and manner of the narrator to be wise and loyal in the eyes of whites. Vet insults the narrator saying that he has eyes, ears and African nose but is unable to understand the simple facts of life. Vet blames that narrator has no sense, so, he can not get any simple meaning. According to Vet, the narrator is like a robot that itself cannot do anything, a mechanical man and a zombie who represses his emotions and even his humanity. Vet tries to be very loyal and psychofact just to please white. Vet has also internalized the white ideology to be submissive before white.

When the narrator took Mr. Norton to the cabins and the Golden Day, Norton fell ill. Dr. Bledsoe gives extra, grandmotherly attention to Mr. Norton's minor injury on the forehead because Norton is more 'superior'. Dr. Bledsoe whirling around with outraged face commands narrator to call the doctor he asks narrator: "Why didn't you

tell me that Mr. Norton had been injured?" (88). Bledsoe tries to be extra sensitive in the minor case of whites so he scolds his own black fellow.

Violence and oppression continue as the narrator moves north to New York as secures a factory job at Liberty Pains. He works in a boiler-type room alongside Lucius, an old black man, in the heart of the factory mixing the chemicals that make up the fundamental bases of the paints produced. While their attention is diverted, the boilers explode, and the narrator becomes unconscious and he regains consciousness in the factory's hospital. White supremacy sticks its nose out when the doctors yell at the narrator to shut up as he screams in pain. As the narrator bites his lip to keep screaming, it is as if the author is reflecting how solves used to try hiding their pain as white overseers whipped them. White supremacy also shows up in a conversation that the narrator hears between two doctors about using the new machine to cure him. The implications are that the two doctors will not try this treatment on a white Harvard graduate, but they are willing to test it on an African-American because he is a minority, which could be exploited. A bizarre series of experiments are performed on the young man's body, aimed at determining what kind of animal a black person is. He says:

> Left alone, I lay fretting over my identity. I suspected that I was really playing a game with myself and that they were taking part. A kind of combat. Actually, they knew as well as I, and for some reason preferred not to face it. It was irritating, and it made me feel sly and alert. I would solve the mystery the next instant. I imagined myself whirling about in my mind like an old man attempting to catch a small boy in some mischief, thinking, who am I? It was no good. It felt like a

clown. Nor was I up to being both criminal and detective-though why

criminal I didn't know. (197-198)

These lines are uttered by the narrator in the hospital of Liberty Paint plant. He was

irritated by the doctor by asking nonsense questions about his identity. He thinks that

he is playing a game and the doctors are taking part in this game of discovering

identity. He feels irritated with the frequent questions asked by the doctors about his

identity. Sometimes he feels like a clown and sometimes like an old man searching

his identity in a game with a child. He does not have any fix identity because of the

racist ideology pervasive in the society.

As he walks through the streets, the theme of white supremacy is employed.

He passes windows advertising products to change people's appearances, such as a

hair and skin colour. One sign proclaims: "You too can be truly beautiful. Win greater

happiness with whiter complexion. Be outstanding in your social set" (217). In the

racist society, everyone yearns to be beautiful with white complexion, to be beautiful

in the eyes of whites, one must make happy to white. Wandering the streets of

Harlem, the narrator is taken in by Mary Rambo, a maternal figure, who strengthens

and nourishes him. His new career is launched when the narrator witnesses the

eviction of an old black couple. Reminded of his past, he is moved, and gives an

spontaneous speech, inciting those gathered in the crowd to take demonstrative action.

A red-headed man, Brother Jack witnesses this phenomenon, an offers the narrator a

job as speaker and leader of the people of Harlem with his organization, the

Brotherhood. The narrator accepts his offer. Jack introduces him to many people at

the Brotherhood party. Here, he recognizes his invisibility. The narrator describes

how none of the other guests would take to him when he first walked into the party:

> We entered a large room in which one entire wall was hung with Italian-red draperies that fell in rich folds from the ceiling. A number of well-dressed men and women were gathered in groups, some beside a grand piano, the others lounging in the pale beige upholstery of the blond wood chairs. Here and there I saw several attractive young women but carefully avoided giving them more than a glance. I felt extremely uncomfortable, although after brief glances no one paid me any special attention. It was as though they hadn't seen me, as though I were here, and yet not here. The others were moving away to join the various groups now, and brother jack took my arm. (244)

This is the scenario of a hotel where narrator is going to get his new identity by the Brotherhood. He goes to meet the members of Brotherhood and other white men in the hotel with the Brother Jack. When he enters the hotel, he sees highly decorated wall, well-dressed men and women in various groups. Some of them were beside the piano and some of them were sitting on the decorated wood chairs. He sees many attractive young women giving glances carefully. When he was introduced with them, no one paid especial attention towards him due to their racist mentality and his skin color. Mean while Brother Jack took his hand to teach him the rules and regulation of Brotherhood.

The narrator is taken under Brother Jack's wing, and slowly but methodically instructed in the ways of the brotherhood. The narrator's job is to bear the grievances of his people and then to articulate them according to the ideals of the underground Brotherhood. After months of success at the Brotherhood's spokesman in the Harlem district, the narrator receives a mysterious note:

> Brother,

> This is advice from a friend who has been watching you closely. *Do not go too fast.* Keep working for the people but remember that your are one of *us* and do not forget if you get too big *they* will cut you down. You are from the south and you know that this is a *white man's world*. So take a friendly advice and go easy so that you can keep on helping the colored people. *They* do not want you to go too fast and will cut you down if you do be smart . . . .(309)

This note tells him that he is going too fast and becoming too popular. He is warned that he will be replaced if he does not slow down because it is 'a white man's world'. The narrator is charged by Wrestrum for attempting to overshadow and dominate the Brotherhood. So, here the theme of white supremacy is used. Hopes of suppressed African-Americans living in Harlem take a back seat as do the narrator's.

In Chapter twenty, the narrator runs into a former member of the Brotherhood named Tod Clifton. Clifton is found on the street pedaling 'sambo' dolls. He says: 'Who wants Sambo, the dancing, prancing? Hurry, hurry, ladies and gentlemen. There's no license for little Sambo, the joy spreader. You can't tax joy, so speak up, ladies and gentlemen …' (349) Here, Clifton was selling sambo dolls though that is banned to sell. So secretly he was selling these dolls and shouted to the customers to buy it hastily because of the fear of police officers. The narrator is chocked to see Clifton selling these dolls, but at the same moment, Clifton gets up and leaves because he sees a police officer approaching to stop him from selling the dolls. When the officer attempts to intercede, Clifton lashes out and hits the officer. The officer immediately pulls out his gun and kills Clifton. Narrator describes:

> as the cop pushed him, jolting him forward and Clifton trying to keep the box from swinging against his leg and saying something over his

shoulder and going forward as one of the pigeons swung down into the

street and up again, leaving a feather floating white in the dazzling

back light of the sun, and I could see the cop push Clifton again,

stepping solidly forward in his black shirt, his arm shooting out stiffly,

sending him in a head-snapping forward stumble until he caught

himself, saying something over his shoulder again, the two moving in a

kind of march that I'd seen many times, but never with anyone like

Clifton. (351)

Here narrator describes the moment when his friend Tod Clifton was shot dead by

white police officer for the cause of selling sambo dolls in the street. The narrator was

eyewitness of that unpleasant incident. Clifton was trying to save himself with his

dolls from the police officer. Narrator has never seen this type of murder before.

Then, the narrator wakes up to the harsh reality that the Brotherhood was not

all it was cracked up to be. Actually Brotherhood was an organization for the

dispossess people in name only but in reality it was just opposite. Therefore the

narrator here says: All our work had been very little, no great change had been made.

And it was all my fault. I'd been so fascinated but the motion that I'd forgotten to

measure what it was bringing forth. I'd been asleep, dreaming. (357) The narrator

realizes his fault by joining Brotherhood without thinking its inner intention and

consequences. Here he regrets for his alliance with the organization because the

Brother couldn't bring great change for the marginalized, dispossess people in the

community.

The narrator is not the only African-American to have felt the limitations of

racist stereotyping. While he tries to escape the grip of prejudice on an individual

level, he encounters other blacks who attempt to prescribe a defense strategy for all

African-Americans due to the internalization of white norms. Each presents a theory of the supposed right way to be black in American and tires to outline how blacks should act in accordance with this theory. The espousers of these theories believe that anyone who acts contrary to their prescriptions betrays the race. Ultimately, however, the narrator finds that such prescriptions only counter stereotype with stereotype and replace one limiting role with another.

Early in the novel, the narrator's grandfather explains his belief that in order to undermine and mock racism, blacks should exaggerate their servility to whites. The grandfather advises the narrator: "I want you to overcome 'em with yeses, underline 'em with grins, agree 'em to death and destruction, let 'em swoller you till they vomit or bust wide open" (17). Here narrator remembers his grandfather's idea how to be present before whites. His grandfathers suggests to the narrator to be spy and loyal to the whites to get rid of the racial prejudice.

Reverend Barbee, a black character, fully internalizes the racist ideology. His sermon reinforces the values of the school, which give the impression that blacks have the opportunity to gain true equality if they work hard enough. Barbee tells the story of the founder of the school. Barbee regards the founder as a god of sorts, whose ideology should be trusted completely, like a religion. The sermon declares that the founder's ideology and life represent a universal example that should be followed. He speaks about the personality of the founder:

> Your leader has kept his promise a thousand fold. I commend him in
> this own right, for he is the co-architect of a great and noble
> experiment. He is a worthy successor to his great friend and it is no
> accident that his great and intelligent leadership has made him our

leading statesman. His is a form of greatness worthy of your imitation.

(112)

Barbee highly praises the founder of the school as god and great noble experiment holder. Interestingly enough, Barbee is physically blind and therefore displays how this ideology is followed blindly. This serves to pigeon hole the efforts of the students at the college, keeping them in control, further emulating this marionette metaphor. Although at this point in the book Invisible Man does not yet realize it, this is his first encounter with his metaphor in a psychological sense.

Dr. Bledsoe, the president of the black local college, has internalized the racist ideology. Thus he tries to be smart before white trustee Mr. Norton. Bledsoe is angry over the fact that narrator took Mr. Norton, one of the white trustees for the university, to the cabins and the Golden Day. Bledsoe also accuses narrator of ruining the institution and its reputation. He asks narrator: "College for Negroes! Boy, what do you know other than how to ruin an institution in half an hour that it took over half a hundred years to build?" (117). Bledsoe accuses narrator also of turning African-American race down: "Norton is one man and I'm another, and while he might think he's satisfied, I know what he isn't! Your poor judgment has caused this school incalculable damage. Instead of uplifting the race, you're torn it down" (117). In an attempt to scare invisible man, Bledsoe clutches an old leg shackle. Bledsoe challenges narrator by saying "You're nobody son. You don't exist-can't you see that?" (120). Dr. Bledsoe relates to the narrator that he should have only showed the trustee what the college would have wanted to see. He decides to rusticate the narrator and says: "Don't stand there and tell me what I already know. Regardless o what I said, as the leader of this institution I can't possibly let this pass. Boy, I'm getting rid of you!" (118). Then the narrator is expelled from the college and sent to New York by Dr.

Bledsoe with seven sealed letters to wealthy employers with the promise that he can return to the college as a paying student. But Bledsoe deceives the narrator by writing explicitly to the employers that the narrator will never be allowed back to the college and he will not be able to return to college as a paying student. Although, Bledsoe is himself a black man, be places himself with the whites and their power.

Bledsoe, the president of the Negro college, is inclined to the corrupting tendency of the dominating and ruling over the innocent and weak members of the college simply to please the white trustee. He regards white as god and is always ready to serve in any way regardless of his own self-respect and dignity simply to possess the power that deserves no significance before whites. In fact Bledsoe has internalized the white norms. In the eyes of Bledsoe all the members of black community are liars. Even if he himself is black he doesn't care while using the derogatory term such as 'black bastard', 'Nigger' in course of addressing his students. Even when the narrator tells the truth to Bledsoe he rebukes him saying "Nigger, this isn't the time to lie. I'm no white man. Tell me the truth!" (116). Bledsoe here doesn't believe his own black fellow and scorns the narrator to tell the truth.

He wants to display himself as excessively sensitive to the wishes of the white trustee and thus expels the innocent student from the college. Dr. Bledsoe's act of victimizing the narrator does not end there. It extends to his act of sending seven letters to his school friends in New York. By providing letters he gives the narrator the hope of getting job in New York and later another opportunity to study in the college. But it is only after reading a letter addressed to Emerson, he recognizes Bledsoe's real intention ". . . I beg of you, sir, to help him continue in the direction of that promise which, like the horizon, recedes ever brightly and distantly beyond the hopeful traveler . . . I am your humble servant" (156). This is the letter, written by

Bledsoe to his friends in New York for a job to narrator. In the letter, Dr. Bledsoe has clearly stated his attitude towards the narrator that he hates him and does not want him to get job anywhere. Bledsoe writes in the letter to keep the Negro running with hope but in vain. In the last part of the letter Dr. Bledsoe has shown his position of a humble servant before the whites. So Bledsoe has internalized the white supremacy and suffers from inferiority complex.

The narrator's position was like a ball in a football ground where he is kicked "from the arrogant absurdity of Norton and Emersion to that of Jack and Brotherhood" (420). Being shocked due to the white racism he came under the umbrella of black alliance but this too was no less in victimizing the weak and the innocent.

Sense of disgust and deep antagonism with black community focuses on the fact that blacks too are responsible in creating chaos and disintegration in their life. There is no pure sense of devotion for the cause. The common scenario in the balck community is that they are either motivated by their own petty self interest or they try to impose their own set of ideology to other. One black brother is ready to victimize the other. There is almost vacuity of trust and co-operation between them. One is ready to pull the leg of another being indifferent to their common enemy.

Although many conceptions arise form within the black community itself, the novel implies that they ultimately proves to be dangerous as white people's racist stereotypes. By seeking to define their identity within a race is too limited because of the stigma caused by the internalization of racist ideology. Black figure such as Dr. Bledsoe and Ras aim to empower themselves but ultimately undermine themselves. Instead of exploring their own identities, Bledsoe and Ras consign themselves and their people to the fixed roles. These men consider treacherous anyone who attempts to act outside their formula of blackness because they have internalized the white

norms as well as racial ideology. But as blacks who seek to restrict and choreograph the behaviour of the black American community as a whole, these men most profoundly betray their people. The narrator struggles to explore his identity but fails. The restricted conceptions and behaviours of African-American characters cause the narrator's identity crisis due to the internalization of racial ideology.

In this way, the narrator not only faces the problem of racism but also encounters intra-racial problems as well as the problem of racial stigma. In the last chapter, the narrator realized that Dr. Bledsoe, Mr. Norton, Ras and Jack have oppressed him. He says: "I lay the prisoner of a group consisting of Jack and old Emerson and Bledsoe and Norton and Ras and the school superintendent and a number of others whom I failed to recognize, but all of whom had run me, who now pressed around me" (458). Finally the narrator realizes that he is deceived by all in the racist society. When he falls into a manhole and struggles to come out of that. He is tired from his efforts of getting out, then he sleeps there remembering his past days in the society with different characters whom he failed to recognize.

The social surrounding of their existence is itself characterized by the sense of frustration, alienation and humiliation. All their naïve attempts get crushed due to the appalling problem of racism. The second class treatment in the social surrounding really makes them pathetic because innocent member of a community has to face the racial hostility due to the internalization of racial ideology that caused the racial stigma in the characters in the novel.

IV. Conclusion

After the extensive study of Ellison's *Invisible Man* through the perspective of Racial Stigma, the research work reaches to the conclusion that as the narrator of *Invisible Man* struggles to arrive at a conception of his own identity, he finds his efforts complicated by the fact that he is a black man living in a racist American society. Throughout the novel, the narrator finds himself passing through a series of communities, from the Liberty Paints plant to the Brotherhood. He finds different ideas about how blacks should behave in society. As the narrator attempts to define himself through the values and expectations imposed on him, the prescribed role limits his identity as an individual.

Upon arriving in New York, the narrator enters the world of the Liberty Paints plant, which achieves financial success by subverting blacks in the service of whites. There, the narrator finds himself involved in a process in which the white depends heavily on the black—both in terms of the mixing of the paint tones and in terms of the racial make up of the workforce. Later, when the narrator joins the Brotherhood, he believes that he can fight for racial equality by working within the ideology of the organization. But, the narrator finds that the Brotherhood likes to use him as a puppet in its abstract project.

Ultimately, the narrator realizes that the racial prejudice of others causes them to see him only as they want to see him. He concludes that he is invisible, in the sense that the world is filled with blind people who cannot or will not see his real nature. He is unable to act according to his own personality. Although the narrator initially embraces his invisibility in an attempt to throw off the limiting nature of stereotype, he finds this tactic too passive in the end. He determines to emerge from his underground 'hibernation' to make his contributions to society as an individual. He

attempts to exert his power on the world outside society's system of prescribed roles. By making proactive contributions to society, he forces others to acknowledge him, to acknowledge his existence of beliefs and behaviours outside their prejudiced expectations.

The narrator not only meets the limitations of racist stereotyping but also faces the problems within African-Americans. He loses part of himself because of their different conceptions and the restricted behaviours. For example, on the one hand, Dr. Bledsoe, the Negro president at the black local college believes that blacks should work hard and adopt the customs and manner of whites to get a success. Because whites are more 'superior', they should please the whites. The narrator becomes a victim of Bledsoe's conception and his restricted behaviour. When the narrator brings Mr. Norton, one of the white trustees for the university, to the cabins and Golden Day, Bledsoe accuses him of destroying the institution and its reputation. Later on, the narrator is expelled from the college. On the other hand, Ras, the aggressive white-hating black opines that blacks get their rights and freedom by spoiling whites. Ras attacks the narrator for not taking steps against whites over the death of Tod Clifton. So, the narrator loses his identity on an individual level also because of intra-racial problems.

Similarly Reverend Barbee, a black character, fully internalizes the racist ideology. His sermon reinforces the values of the school, which give the impression that blacks have the opportunity to gain true equality if they work hard enough. Barbee tells the story of the founder of the school. Barbee regards the founder as a god of sorts, whose ideology should be trusted completely, like a religion. The sermon declares that the founder's ideology and life represent a universal example that should be followed.

The fundamental problem with American values is that it cherishes outward success that forces the blacks to seek power, beauty and material affluence in whiteness because their dream teaches them happiness lies in whiteness but such stereotypical view has brought tragedy in black's lives. In brief, the blacks are stereotypically behaved and discriminated by whites due to the internalization of racist ideology that cause the crisis of identity.

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